

Testimony of Prevention Professionals Sheryl Sprague and Krystle Blake

H.B. No. 5301 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING OPIOID ANALGESIC PRESCRIPTIONS ISSUED TO MINORS.

March 3, 2016 Committee on Children Public Hearing

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, members of the Committee on Children, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding HB 5301 An Act Concerning Opioid Analgesic Prescriptions Issued to Minors. As the Chairperson and creators of the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition (MHYC), the Local Prevention Council for the City of Meriden we are submitting testimony in support of this bill.

The Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition is a community coalition created to work collaboratively to reduce and prevent alcohol, other substance use and their related problems through raising awareness while promoting healthy lifestyles. We are recipients of a Federal Drug Free Communities grant to address underage drinking, marijuana use and prescription drug misuse in the city of Meriden.

We in Connecticut are in the midst of a public health crisis with regard to opioid abuse. We must protect our young people from the ravages of addiction. This proposed bill will go far in safeguarding our youth. Physicians are required under the PMP (Prescription drug monitoring program) to review the complete picture of a patient's controlled substance use, including prescriptions by other providers, so that the provider can properly manage the patient's treatment. We hear from pharmacists that far too many prescribers still do not enter patient information into the PMP database. The requirements included in HB 5301 are crucial to ensuring that parents are included in decisions regarding their minor child's health and wellbeing. We support the requirement that parental consent is required for opioid prescriptions. Parent and youth education regarding the dangers of taking opioid analgesics with alcohol, benzodiazepines, and other central nervous system depressants is lifesaving information. We support the requirement that parents must sign a statement indicating that they understand the opioid prescribed has the potential for abuse or addiction. There is a great misperception that since these are prescribed medications, they are safe and harmless and do not hold the potential for misuse.

We support that the prescription is issued at the time of discharge from a hospital, emergency facility, ambulatory surgical center or facility. Far too often we hear firsthand about prescriptions written for a 30 day supply of opioids up to a month in advance of wisdom teeth extractions. We have spoken with youth who have either taken these prescribed pills long before their surgical procedure ever takes place, or have sold these pills to peers.

Our children need our support. We sincerely appreciate your continued work to safeguard them. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

Krystle Blake, MHYC Chairperson, Project Coordinator for the Meriden Drug Free Communities Grant

Sheryl Sprague, CPS, Rushford Prevention Manager and Project Director for the Meriden Drug Free Communities Grant